

# THE HISTORICAL CONNECTION



HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
CITY OF LAS VEGAS

The official newsletter of the Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission, dedicated to saving the city's legacy and heritage

## Venture along the Historic 'Pioneer Trail'

### The opening of the 6-mile "Pioneer Trail" . . .

that stretches from the Las Vegas Springs Preserve to the Las Vegas Mormon Fort was celebrated recently on January, 19, 2006.

The unveiling took place at KCEP Power 88.1 radio, site of the former Westside School, located at 330 W. Washington Ave. It is just one of 16 stops along the trail that tells the story of early Las Vegas.

The city of Las Vegas and Clark County joined forces to complete the project with funding from the sale of U.S. Bureau of Land Management land under the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. Funding in the amount of \$365,250 provided for local artists and historians to design the layout for banners and markers and research the text for the markers, which have been erected at each stop. Historic preservation officer for the city of Las Vegas, Courtney Mooney was instrumental in keeping the project on track.



The Pioneer Trail leads visitors through the area where the development of early Las Vegas began. As you travel from site to site, one gains a sense of the adventurous spirit of those who contributed to the growth and cultural heritage of the valley.

Start at the historic 180-acre Las Vegas Springs Preserve on Valley View Boulevard where the earliest habitants of "the meadows" lived over 5,000 years ago, and where modern water resource development began in the early 1900's.

Ward 5 Councilman Lawrence Weekly, who represents the area for the city of Las

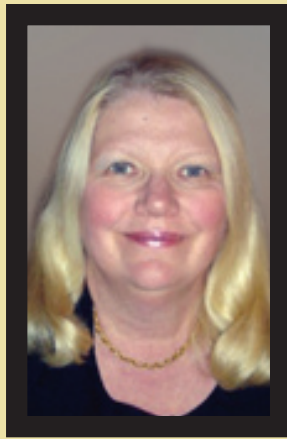
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## Biography Corner: Mary Hausch

*by Chuck Baker*

Mary Hausch has served on the Historic Preservation Commission since 1997 and is their official representative for the John S. Park historic neighborhood. "I've been privileged to live in a house for 18 years that is now 56 years old. I think living in the downtown area, I have really gotten religion on the importance of historic preservation" said Commissioner

Hausch. "I live in the Gubler House. They were a prominent LDS family who once lived there."

Ms. Hausch continued, "To me, this is a critical time for historic preservation. We've lost one old neighborhood downtown, and the Railroad Cottages have been preserved [elsewhere]; but there is a rush to build all these high rises." Hausch says she and other residents want the downtown area to be revitalized, "but we don't want the shadow of high rises overlooking our houses."

An assistant professor at the Hank Greenspun School of Journalism and Media Studies at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Hausch sometimes weaves preservation into her classes. "When I teach interviewing, the ultimate assignment is to interview me about Historic Preservation."

Commissioner Hausch has two children, Walter, 18 and Anna, 12. The Ohio native has lived in Las Vegas since 1971 when she moved here from Colorado Springs. She is married to state senator, Bob Coffin, who grew up in the John S. Park neighborhood and now represents that downtown area.

## A Frequently Asked Question

### How Does the Federal Government Designate Properties as Historic?

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 assigns the National Register of Historic Places a central role in recognizing historic resources that are significant in American history, and identifying them as worthy of preservation. Anyone can prepare a nomination to the National Register, working with the State Historic Preservation Officer in their State. State and Federal Historic Preservation Officers also survey and evaluate properties, determine which of these properties are eligible for listing, and prepare nominations to the Register. Nominations submitted through the States must first be approved by a Review Board appointed by the Governor before being reviewed by the National Register staff. If the staff at the National Register concludes that

the property meets the criteria for evaluation, it is recommended for listing to the Keeper of the National Register.

Listing simply honors the property by recognizing its historic significance, and does not place any restrictions on the property owner, provided that no Federal license, permit, or funding is involved. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore or maintain them. In addition, owners of listed properties may be able to obtain Federal historic preservation funding or Federal investment tax credits for rehabilitation. For more information, go to [www.cr.nps.gov/nr/](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/).



The Las Vegas Mormon Fort, listed on the National Register since 1972.

# Historic 'Pioneer Trail'

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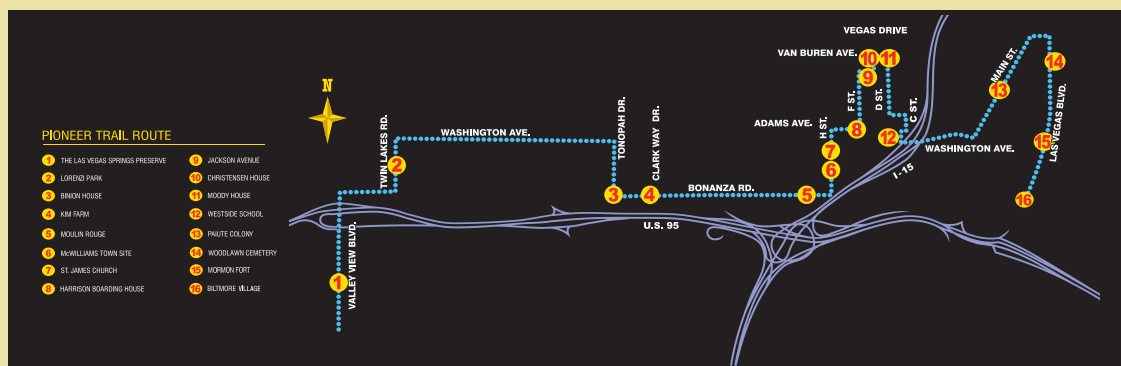
Vegas, said "The primary purpose of the trail is to recognize and preserve the cultural and historical significance of these places for Las Vegas citizens and future generations. These historic structures will remind us of our heritage and encourage us to look ahead to the future."

"The trail is a wonderful educational addition to this community. It promotes pride and culture and will be a great tool for teaching our young people about their heritage and what makes this valley great," said County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates, whose district the trail traverses.

More information about the Pioneer Trail may be viewed online at: <http://www.lasvegasnevada.gov/files/PioneerTrailBroch.pdf>.

## Locations along the trail:

1. Big Springs
2. Lorenzi Park, which originated as a private resort in 1926;
3. The Binion House, the largest house in Las Vegas when built in 1942;
4. Site of the Kim produce farm, one of the only such farms in Las Vegas during the 1930s and '40s;
5. The Moulin Rouge, which opened in 1955 as the first racially integrated hotel and casino in Las Vegas;
6. The McWilliams town site, Las Vegas's first business and residential development;
7. St. James the Apostle Catholic Church, which opened in 1940 as the valley's second Catholic church;
8. Harrison boarding house, which hosted many black stars who were not allowed to stay at the Las Vegas Strip hotels where they performed in the 1940s and '50s;
9. Jackson Street commercial district, which bustled with activity in the 1940s and '50s as it served a segregated black population;
10. Christensen House, "The Castle," a 1935 fairy tale residence;
11. Moody House, where the first black career Las Vegas policeman was raised;
12. Westside School, built in 1923 to educate area children, now a radio station and the oldest remaining schoolhouse in the city;
13. Las Vegas Paiute Colony, a 10-acre site bought in 1911 to provide a home to members of this indigenous tribe, which now has its Tribal Council offices here;
14. Woodlawn Cemetery, created in 1914, now hosts several notable residents;
15. Las Vegas Mormon Fort, a remnant of the complex of adobe structures built by Mormon colonists in 1855-6, now a state historic park; and
16. Biltmore Village, a neighborhood built during World War II to address a housing shortage for military personnel and their families.



## Upcoming Events

### April

- 4/8 C.A.M.P. Commissioner Assistance Mentoring Program

### May

- Historic Preservation Month
- 5/20 Cultural History Fair Las Vegas Springs Preserve 10am-7pm

### June

- 6/2-3 U.S. Conference of Mayors 74th Annual Meeting Las Vegas, NV

If you missed the workshop, please contact the NV State Historic Preservation Office at 1-775-684-3448 for information on this topic.

# Morelli House

## City of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission Announces Renovation of Junior League's Historic Morelli House



One of the city's most fabulous mid-century modern homes is undergoing an extensive renovation. The Junior League of Las Vegas has received \$50,000 from the Nevada State Commission for Cultural Affairs to restore the interior of the historic Morelli House.

The Morelli House, now located at 9th and Bridger, was once located in the prestigious Desert Inn Estates overlooking the second fairway at the Desert Inn Golf Course. Built in the early 1950s, the Estates was the first Las Vegas development that employed modern residential design. Notable performers such as Keely Smith, Betty Grable and her hus-

band, bandleader Harry James, all built homes there. Former Nevada governor Bob Miller also grew up in the Estates.

The Morelli House was designed and built in 1959 by the Sands' orchestra conductor and music director Antonio Morelli, with the help of architect Hugh E. Taylor. Morelli was a significant character in the history of Las Vegas. A classically-trained musician, he was reportedly brought to town by the mob to upgrade the level of local culture. As music director for the Sands, he came into contact with America's top performers of the day, and it has been reported that singers like Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis, Jr. and others worked through scores in Morelli's music room.

The League acquired the Morelli House in the summer of 2000 after the Desert Inn golf course and surrounding estates were slated for demolition to make way for a new mega-resort. The house was moved to its permanent location in 2001, after which it was listed on the Nevada State Register of Historic Places, and in 2003 the Morelli House became the league's official headquarters. For tour or project information, contact Sherry Colquit at 233-9035.



The Historic Preservation Commission is a 12-member board made up of community members appointed by the Las Vegas City Council. The board is responsible for hearing and recommending approval for designation of historic landmarks, properties and districts to the city's register, overseeing alterations, new construction a designated properties within the designated district; making recommendations to the City Council. Meetings: 4th Wednesday, 12:00, 731 S. Fourth Street, except 3rd Wednesday in November and December.

Bob Stoldal, chairperson  
Dorothy Wright, vice-chair  
Ray Aikens  
Bob Bellis  
H. Richard Cuppett  
Mary Hausch  
Andrew Kirk  
Pat Klenk  
Dave Millman  
James Veltman  
Janet White

For more information about historic preservation efforts, contact:  
Courtney Mooney - Historic Preservation Officer  
731 South Fourth, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101  
phone: 702.229.5260 • fax: 702.384.1397  
cmooney@lasvegasnevada.gov

## Nevada Commission for Cultural Affairs Grant Awards for 2006



The Historic Westside School (1923), at 330 Washington Ave. will receive \$70,000 in grant funding to replace the deteriorating roof tiles.



Historic Post Office and Courthouse (1931), located at 301 Stewart Ave. will receive \$298,000 for exterior renovation such as lead paint removal and window repair.